

IN THE CLAIMS:

Page 25, line 1, change "CLAIMS" to --WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:--.

Please cancel claims 1-13 without prejudice or disclaimer and substitute new claims 14-25 therefor as follows:

14. (New) An optical fibre cable comprising:
an inner tube in which is loosely housed at least one tube in which is inserted at least one optical fibre, comprising
a mixture of powders comprising
- a first fraction of water-mediated expanding powder, and
- a second fraction of an inert powder with a preset particle size, less than that of said water-mediated expanding powder,
being inserted into said at least one tube, and
a fluid stopper being inserted in a space between said at least one tube and said inner tube.

15. (New) An optical fibre cable according to Claim 14, wherein said fraction of water-mediated expanding powder is between 40% and 80% by weight of said mixture.

16. (New) An optical fibre cable according to Claim 14, wherein said preset particle diameter of said inert powder is such that at least 90% by weight of said inert powder is less than 40 μ m in diameter.

17. (New) An optical fibre cable according to Claim 14, wherein said inert powder is talc, graphite, molybdenum disulphide or PTFE in powder form.

18. (New) An optical fibre cable according to Claim 17, wherein said inert powder is talc.

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19. (New) An optical fibre cable according to Claim 14, wherein said water-mediated expanding powder is poly(sodium acrylate).

20. (New) An optical fibre cable according to Claim 14, wherein said water-mediated expanding powder has a particle diameter such that at least 90% by weight of said inert powder is less than 80 μm in diameter.

21. (New) An optical fibre cable according to Claim 14, wherein said at least one tube has an inside diameter of less than 1.7 mm.

22. (New) An optical fibre cable according to Claim 14, wherein said fluid stopper is a silicone stopper fluid.

23. (New) An optical fiber cable according to Claim 22, wherein said fluid stopper comprises a polysiloxane.

24. (New) An optical fiber cable according to Claim 23, wherein said fluid stopper comprises polydimethylsiloxane thickened with colloidal silica.

25. (New) An optical fiber cable according to Claim 14, wherein said tubes are made of a mixture comprising an ethylene/vinyl acetate copolymer.

REMARKS

In this Preliminary Amendment, the claims have been amended to conform them to the article 34 amendment filed in PCT/EP00/02516 and to customary U.S. practice.

Claims 14-25 are pending in this application. No new matter has been added.